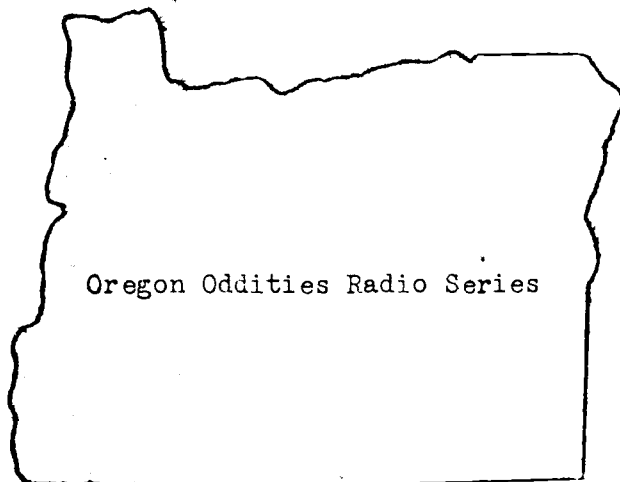


Oregon
Collection

Series II, no. 11, Oregon Oddities Radio Series

OREGON ODDITIES
AND
ITEMS OF INTEREST



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The Federal Writers' and Historical Records Survey Projects
of the
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION OF OREGON
409 Elks Building
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The items in this bulletin, selected from the material compiled by the Federal Writers' Project and the Historical Records Survey of the Works Progress Administration, are representative of the significant collections being made by these nation-wide programs.

The Historical Records Survey is inventorying all sources of early Oregon history, including county and state records; town and church archives; historic cemeteries; old manuscripts and imprints; old printing presses; monuments and relics; private diaries, letters and memoirs; historic buildings; and Indian records and lore.

The chief undertaking of the Federal Writers' Project has been the American Guide Series of books. State guide books have been published for Idaho, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Delaware, Mississippi, Rhode Island, South Dakota, North Dakota and Vermont. The manuscript for the Oregon Guide is completed and will be ready for release this spring. The Oregon Guide, the first authentic tourist guide of the state, is fully illustrated and will contain several chapters dealing with history, government, industry and commerce, labor, transportation, agriculture and education. Half the Guide will be devoted to tours of major Oregon highways, with points of interest logged mile by mile.

The Oregon Federal Writers' Project has written and distributed the following books:

Flax in Oregon
Builders of Timberline Lodge
Fire Prevention in Portland
History of Portland Fire Alarm System

The Oregon Historical Records Survey has written and distributed the following publications:

The Inventory of the Archives of Morrow County
Diary of Basil Longworth, Oregon Pioneer
Transportation Items from the Weekly Oregonian
Married Women's Separate Property Rights
Letter from Luckiamute Valley, 1846
Daily Sales of an Auburn Store, 1868
Abstract of a Pioneer Road, 1864-1911
From Corvallis to Crescent City, 1874
County Histories, University of Oregon, The
Commonwealth Review

OREGON ODDITIES RADIO SERIES

Beginning early in February the Oregon Oddities Radio Series, written, prepared and sponsored by the Federal Writers' Project and the Oregon Historical Records Survey, will be broadcast from transcribed programs over the following stations:

KWJJ	Portland, Sundays at 4:45 PM		
		Fridays at 3:30 PM	
KAST	Astoria	KOOS	Marshfield
KSLM	Salem	KFJI	Klamath Falls
KORE	Eugene	KMED	Medford
KLBM	La Grande	KBND	Bend
	KWLK	Kelso - (Longview)	
	KRNR	Roseburg	

Although this radio series bears the same title as the semi-monthly bulletin, issued jointly by the Federal Writers' Project and the Historical Records Survey, the programs will not, except in rare cases, be a dramatization of the material presented in the Oregon Oddities bulletin. In the near future local newspapers and radio stations will announce the time of these broadcasts.

WRITING THE DRAMAS. In selecting material for radio dramatization the Federal Writers' Project and the Historical Records Survey workers attempted to find Oregon folk tales and incidents in Oregon history that not only were dramatic and significant, but were also authentic. Every attempt was made to make the characterizations real. If a man were a southerner and spoke with a drawl, that was indicated in the script. If he were a trapper and mountain man like Doc Meek, who was also a Virginian, his dialogue was written in the vernacular of his time. In the case of the story of the Umatilla Colony, most of whose members were of German origin or descent, the characters all spoke in German dialect. In the Umatilla House dramatization, care was taken to include several stories of folk nature that have been told of the famous hotel at Dalles.

In a fifteen minute radio program authenticity, true characterization, and drama, must be included in a story that can last no more than twelve minutes to reproduce. The announcements, signature and a song augment the drama to fill exactly a fifteen minute period of radio time.

STUDIO TECHNIQUE. When the script is finished it is turned over to the program director who selects the cast. He delivers the script to the sound effects man who

studies it carefully. If his library of sound effect records does not provide suitable sounds, he must devise them. Ocean waves, for an example, as heard in the Captain Robert Gray drama, were made by placing buckshot within a football bladder, inflating the bladder, and rolling it from side to side close to the microphone. The fabulous yellow stones in the Lost Blue Bucket Mine story were nothing less than walnuts in a bucket. The gravel in which the sailors in Sailors' Diggings found gold was dried corn in a tin pan.

The director, having chosen his cast, rehearses the actors carefully in their parts, each reading his lines from the script. When each is familiar with his role, the director assembles the announcements, the sound effects, the cast and the music and times them carefully. Only when the whole can be effectively produced in the required space of time is the actual transcription made.

ELECTRICAL TRANSCRIPTIONS. The actual cutting of a transcription often appears very amusing to a watcher. There seems to be little coordination among the various units -- the sound records running on a nearby turntable, the isolated microphone with its group of gesticulating actors, the waiting singers, and the assortment of implements to be used for sound effects. When the record is made, however, all the apparently unrelated elements resolve into one short drama, designed to be understood solely through the sense of hearing. The only difference between a regular studio broadcast and an electrical transcription is that the transcribed program, rather than passing out over the air, is picked up in the adjoining room by the recording apparatus and cut into a record for subsequent and perhaps numerous broadcasts.

Electrical transcriptions are first made on a very sensitive record which reproduces all sound faithfully. The cellulose acetate material used for the master recording is of such nature that the record itself will not burn.

The fine, hair-like grooves, however, made as the needle cuts into the record, are highly inflammable. Should this sensitive master record be played a few times the sounds produced become distorted and untrue. For this reason dupli-

... on a more lasting material are made
a process known as pressing. These per-
manent records may be played almost indefi-
nitely upon any phonograph. Electrical
descriptions, however, are not to be con-
fused with ordinary phonograph records. A
firmer material is used in making the radio
transcriptions which eliminates surface
noises and produces true sounds.

SOUND EFFECTS. The sound effects used
in radio work are often electrically tran-
scribed. Broadcasting stations have com-
plete sets of sound effects ranging from
the squeaking of a door to the howling of
a wolf pack. When a certain sound is
needed to make a radio drama more realistic
a transcription of that sound is played
in the space of time needed to give the
desired effect.

OREGON ODDITIES SERIES

The Aurora Colony. The Aurora colony,
located between Portland and Salem, was
founded upon the communal principle of
brotherly love and universal equality.
Under the kindly and efficient leadership
of Dr. Keil the colony thrived. Thousands
of acres of fertile land were brought under
cultivation. Each man sought the kind of
employment he liked best, whether in the
mill, the cabinet shop, the hotel or the
store. Each delivered his output to the
communal storehouse, and when he desired
anything for himself, his family or his
neighbors he received it for the asking. When
Dr. Keil died there was no one to take his
place as leader. The colony disbanded.

In the final dissolution and division
of property equity prevailed in bringing
about a peaceful and fair settlement. --
Bibliography: Bethel and Aurora by Robert
Stricks.

The Barlow Trail. "God never made a
mountain that had no place to go over it,"
declared Sam Barlow, as he determined to
blaze a trail south of Mount Hood across
the Cascades. Rather than wait at The
falls for their turn on the barges down
the Columbia River, Barlow and Joel Palmer
blazed a way and cut a trail for their ox
teams and wagons. Progress was slow, win-
ter set in, the food supply ran low. Half
starved, the party pushed on until, aided
by a rescue party, they reached Oregon City
on December 25, 1845. However, Sam Barlow
was convinced that the trail would turn
the tide of immigration across the moun-
tains. He obtained a charter to construct

and operate a toll road along the trail
he had helped build across the Cascades.
Later he threw the road open to the pub-
lic and in the years that followed thou-
sands of settlers used it to reach new
homes in the Willamette Valley. Today
Oregon State Highway 50, on its way
across the Cascades, crosses and re-
crosses the old Barlow Trail. --Bibliog-
raphy: Oregon Historical Quarterly-March,
1902; September 1912; September 1925.

The Lost Blue Bucket Mine. This is
a story of a famous lost mine, discovered
somewhere near the present town of Vale
by a boy. The lad, a member of the lost
immigrant train of 1845, found some
bright pebbles near a spring. He stored
his find in an old blue bucket but it was
not until later that he discovered the
bright pebbles were gold. Countless ex-
peditions have returned to the vicinity,
trying to re-discover the lost El Dorado
but the location of the Lost Blue Bucket
Mine is still unknown. --Bibliography:
A scrap book of clippings from the Blue
Mountain Eagle, owned by Clint Haight,
editor.

Laughing Devil Canyon. Back in the
1850's, during the various gold rushes
that swept through the west, two pros-
pectors decided to search for gold in the
wilds of the Curry County hills. They
bought their supplies at a general store,
where the storekeeper warned them that
nobody entered or remained in Laughing
Devil Canyon after dark. Nevertheless,
the two miners headed across country to
the mouth of the canyon. They reached
their destination about noon and without
hesitation started up between the can-
yon's gloomy walls. All afternoon they
worked their way slowly up the gulch,
prospecting as they went. Toward sunset
they found gold and named their claim
the Pick and Shovel Mine. As night
settled down, the two prospectors sat
by their campfire planning how they would
spend their new-found wealth. Suddenly
horrible laughter echoed along the canyon
walls. Closer and closer the laughter
sounded, so terrifying that even the
thought of gold could keep them there
no longer. They fled and another lost
mine was added to Oregon's mining legends.
Bibliography: Coos County Newspaper;
pioneer reminiscences.

Star of Oregon. Six young, pioneer Oregon farmers, blessed with more courage and determination than nautical knowledge, built a ship which they proudly named Star of Oregon, and set sail for San Francisco. Joseph Gale, though not a master mariner, was the only one who had ever been to sea and was therefore named captain. The other members of the crew gained their knowledge going down to the sea in ships by reading a nautical almanac. However, by the time they reached the Columbia River bar, they found that going to sea was quite different from farming. By the time the Star of Oregon had sailed over the bar into the Pacific they felt inclined to agree with their friends who had predicted they had built a coffin for themselves. Coming off fog, sea sickness and inexperience, the crew drifted for five days. Until the fog lifted and they found themselves at the heads of the Golden Gate, neither the captain nor his crew had had any idea where they were. The farmer-mariners sold the Star of Oregon at San Francisco for enough money to buy over a thousand head of cattle and a hundred head of horses and mules which they drove back to Oregon.—Bibliography: Davis and Dryden's Marine History.

The Umatilla House. The Umatilla House drama is the story of that nationally famous hostelry at The Dalles on the Columbia River. The owners, Nicholas Sinnot and Major Handley gave the same service to the rich who could pay for it and the poor who could not. The Umatilla House was the center of commercial, political and social life for the entire upper Columbia River valley. Upon its register appeared such names as President Ulysses S. Grant, General Sherman, Henry Villard, Thomas A. Edison, John L. Sullivan and James Corbett. The building itself no longer stands, but whenever old-timers gather they re-tell the tales of the Umatilla House, the hotel and a philosophy, whose owners' policy of welcoming bums and bankers has become a legend. Best loved among these stories is the one about the bum who became prosperous when Sinnot and Handley were bankrupted by a fire that burned the old Umatilla House and came to the aid of his benefactors by sending them \$50,000 to rebuild.—Bibliography: Old newspaper clipping, reminiscences of pioneers and historical documents.

Sailors' Diggings. During the southern Oregon gold excitement in 1852 five sailors deserted their ship at Crescent City and started for the mines. Pooling their money, they bought picks, shovels, pans and a supply of food; then struck out along an old Indian trail towards Jacksonville. Several days later they were hopelessly lost. They stopped one evening on the banks of a creek high up in the Siskiyou. It was there that two members of the bewildered party decided that gold was "where you find it" and started digging. They struck gold. That was the beginning of the mining camp of Waldo, also known as Sailors' Diggings, now a ghost town, but for many years one of the richest mining sections in southern Oregon.—Bibliography: Old newspaper clippings; pioneer reminiscences.

The Santa Maria of Hobsonville. Sixty years ago Tillamook County was a region of forests interspersed with grassy plains and isolated from the rest of the state by forbidding mountains and the lack of roads. At a point of the bay known to the Indians as Talapus Cradle, Joseph Smith built a sawmill. The little town of Hobsonville grew up around it. It was soon evident that the mill could produce more lumber than the local market could consume, and, unless a freighter could be induced to stop at Hobsonville, Smith's mill would have to be shut down and the little town would die. Despite his best efforts Smith could not persuade a ship's captain to cross the Tillamook bar. Every pilot considered the undertaking too dangerous. Meanwhile the mill dock was stacked high with unsold lumber.

Smith's young son went to San Francisco, and, after many rebuffs, finally persuaded the Captain of the Santa Maria to enter Tillamook harbor. At Hobsonville the Santa Maria was loaded with lumber and made ready to sail. The captain, fearing the dangers of the bar, threatened not to return for another cargo. If he were not returning he agreed to sound one blast when he had crossed the bar. Three blasts would indicate his sure return. Since the fate of the town depended upon the signal numbers it seemed an eternity to the waiting

sidents of Hobsonville before the ship
crossed the bar and three blasts of the
Santa Maria's whistle sounded across the
harbor.--Bibliography: Old newspaper
clippings, old maps and interviews with
descendants of the early pioneers.

Joe Meek: Mountain Man. A slack fur
trader in 1840 forced Joe Meek, "Doc" Newell
and their associate trappers to abandon the
free and easy life they enjoyed in the
Rocky Mountains and to move to the Willamette
Valley. Packing their scanty stores
into wagons, with their Nez Perce wives and
children perched atop the loads, they set
out. After many difficulties they reached
the Whitman Mission at Walla Walla. There
they abandoned the wagons and made the rest
of the way to the Willamette Valley by pack
trains. Weeks later, on a grey December
day, cold, weary, and hungry, they reached
the Willamette River near where Milwaukie
stands.

On Christmas day of 1840 Meek and the
mountain men staked out claims on the
Columbia Plains. They suffered extreme
hardships that first winter but were saved
from starvation by grain which they secured
from Vancouver. With the arrival of spring
they took to the beaver streams again,
hoping they could live by trapping in
Oregon. When they took their pelts to the
Hudson's Bay Company they found them worth-
less; for hats were then being made of
elk instead of beaver fur as formerly.
There was nothing left for the mountain
men to do but farm their land. It was hard

to give up the life of adventure and
freedom and to settle down to the quiet
existence of community life, but as
time passed they became respected mem-
bers of the Oregon territory. Joe Meek
was elected sheriff of the Provisional
government in 1843 and in 1848, follow-
ing the Whitman massacre, he made a
spectacular trip across the plains to
Washington bearing a memorial asking
federal aid for protection against the
Indians. When the Oregon territory was
formed he was made United States Marshal.
Bibliography: Frances Fuller Victor;
River of the West.

Captain Robert Gray. Undaunted by
his failure to make important discover-
ies on his western exploration voyage
of 1788, Captain Robert Gray returned
to the Pacific Coast in 1792. Piloting
the Columbia, he cruised the Oregon
coast, observing every possible inlet
and studying the muddy channels the
rivers sent out to the sea. The force
and width of one of these channels so
attracted his attention that, on the
morning of May 17, 1792, he piloted the
sturdy little Columbia through the for-
bidding breakers and into the river
which he named in honor of his ship.
His discovery was later the basis of
one of the most important claims the
United States made to the Oregon country.
Bibliography: Oregon Historical Quar-
terly: September, 1929; March, 1930, March
1935. Oregonian, January 27, 1935. . .

The next Oregon Oddities pamphlet
will be devoted to questions and an-
swers pertinent to Oregon history,
geology and geography.